

# DEUTSCH-BRITISCHE GESELLSCHAFT

## 51<sup>st</sup> Young Königswinter Conference

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July – Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2011

### Conference Report



**A World in Motion – impacts of global developments on  
Germany and Great Britain**

## Report

When we arrived for the Young Königswinter Conference 2011 at the Europäische Akademie in Berlin-Grunewald, as so many British and German participants before us had done, no one really knew what to expect. We knew that we were meant to discuss current issues and trends in our society, politics and the economic world and that we would do this in study groups we had signed up for before. We also knew that we would hear a number of interesting guest speakers and that additionally there would be a considerable support programme. But apart from that everything else remained to be seen. We quickly realized, however, that the conference theme “*A World in Motion – impacts of global developments on Germany and Great Britain*” meant that we had lots to discuss in these next few days.

### 1. The opening session and the guest speakers

When for the first time all participants of this year’s Young Königswinter Conference met on the morning of 19 July in the conference hall we were greeted by Gebhardt von Moltke, former German Ambassador and Chairman of the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft, and former British Ambassador Sir Nigel Broomfield (photo, p.3, l.) who was to chair this conference. In attendance of other members of the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft we were told about the importance the Gesellschaft attaches to German-British relations in general and to the task of getting young people from both countries together in order to discuss public affairs. But Gebhardt von Moltke (photo, m.) also insisted that this was our conference because the heart of it were the study groups on three main issues – society, politics and economics – which we would organize by ourselves.

After the introduction we were presented by a German and a British view of current global developments and their impact on our respective countries. Simon McDonald (photo, r.), British Ambassador to Germany, looked at current events from a British perspective and told us that he enjoyed speaking at the Young Königswinter Conference because it gave him the opportunity to tell a young audience what he personally thought about German-British relations rather than what the British government did. While stating that German-British relations in general are very good he made



us look at three areas where there have been striking differences in policy between Great Britain and Germany lately: the UN Security Council resolution 1973 on Libya from March of this year, energy policy and Germany’s “Energiewende” and the Euro crisis. On all of these issues McDonald gave us interesting impulses to think about the long-term consequences of decisions taken by our politicians these days. On Libya, he remarked, we ended up on different sites

after close contacts. But there were sensitive times in Germany and the Libya vote was not setting a model for the future. The sudden reversal on nuclear energy and the reaction to the Fukushima accident were difficult to explain to UK audiences. It raises serious questions on energy security and the potential of renewable energy. In the Euro-crisis the UK stands on the sidelines but a strong Euro and the quick resolution of the crisis is of profound importance also for the UK. Dr. Peter Schoof from

the Europe division of the German Foreign Ministry gave us an official but also very personal insight into the view from Berlin. He focused on two issues which are currently of great interest to German foreign policy: the Arab spring and the Euro. On the issue of the Euro Schoof gave us an idea of how difficult it can be for politicians to take decisions in a critical moment like the present financial situation and how incremental problem solving in a situation like this might be. Next day's summit meeting of the Euro-zone heads of government will be decisive as they will have to address fundamental questions. For Germany a transfer union was unacceptable and the Bundestag wants to see the participation of the private sector in the defaults of Greece. There was a great worry that other countries may be drawn into the financial crisis. He quoted Germany's former finance minister Peer Steinbrück who had once said that we might think we see light at the end of the tunnel but that this light actually is the light of another train coming towards us. On Africa and the "Arabellions" Schoof looked at the question of what the European Union can do in this area. He addressed the possible important role of Turkey in this situation as many countries in the region consider her democratic structures as role model. He felt that the EU has to be more open on visa and economic access for these countries and to work more closely with the societies there to help them built up democratic and economic structures. When the lectures were over it was just like Sir Nigel Broomfield said: they had been a great introduction to our conference.

Short introductions to the study group topics by selected participants themselves followed. Mark and Anita started by introducing current political trends. Mark, who is a PhD candidate in International Relations at the University of Cambridge, also addressed the developments in the Arab world. He questioned our goal of fostering democracies in these countries and asked whether we had in fact not rather been an obstacle to democracy in this region? The feeling of neglect by a large part of the population in the Southern Mediterranean's, whose interests and hopes we have ignored because we were fostering certain elites instead, was also an issue Mark dealt with. He ended with the question of whether we and the North African countries actually were drifting apart and asked whether this in fact was such a bad thing. Anita, who is a policy researcher at Policy Network in London, also dealt with the developments in North Africa but concentrated on the issues of humanitarian interventions and migration. She specifically looked at the role of the EU in these areas and came to the conclusion that the events in North Africa are very much testing the EU's migration policy; they also have strong repercussions on the relations between EU members themselves when dealing with refugees from these countries who arrive at the shores of the EU because they have fled from their home countries in pursuit of a better life in Europe.

Sahera and Max gave the introductions on current economic trends. Sahera, who works as a Management Consultant at RT IT Consulting in London, talked about the banking crisis and the European debt crisis. But she also spoke about other issues like the changes to our job market and raised the question where our jobs in the future will be? She also addressed the topic of possible energy shortage and its impact on our economies. She also spoke about trust and corporate law and made clear how differently corporate law issues are dealt with in certain



countries (for example Russia) compared to the UK or Germany. Max, who is a Research Associate at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, reminded us that economic questions are also always political ones – at the moment even more so than before. He spoke about the Euro crisis and about how the macroeconomic imbalances in the euro zone between a core group and the Southern periphery have become apparent through the financial crisis and addressed the question of possible effective solutions. He warned that political resignation and anti-Europeanism would be much more dangerous for our democracies than the protests in certain European countries against budget cuts imposed by their governments. He concluded: Is it not the time for economists and politicians to rethink what a sustainable economic policy has to look like?

Adrian (Photo) and Anna then talked about important societal trends and challenges. Adrian, who is a Corporate Responsibility Consultant at Sancroft International in London, identified five main drivers of societal change: One, demographic developments – 250.000 people are born every day; two, economic influences: increased competition for European countries and the US from other regions – what does that mean for our middle classes?; three, environmental solutions and climate change with their influences on living conditions and repercussions on the availability of resources – especially food, four, technological changes and for instance the widespread use of the Internet and its impact on the state and civil society, and lastly five, political trends and how we do react to this increasingly crowded, growing, interconnected and resource constrained global societies? Anna, who is a freelance Journalist from Berlin, then concentrated on the implications of technological changes for our governments and our media. In her view decision-makers have been weakened through these developments: politicians can be put under pressure more easily now – for example through blogging



on the Internet. Additionally, journalists have lost their function as “gate-keepers” of information as people can get information they look for directly from the Internet. The Internet also has given citizens a possibility to organize political protest more easily as they do not need to organize like-minded people to go out onto the street to voice opposition to a certain issue

but through a forum on the Internet. People tend to express their views or to protest more online because they don't feel represented by the political elites and they see the media not sufficiently addressing their problems anymore. Lastly, Anna raised the question of transparency in politics; she said that the public is not prepared anymore to accept secret deals in politics. The demand for transparency has strong implications for the political decision making processes. She concluded her lecture by saying that new models of political participation will develop in our societies because of the new technologies.

Almut Möller, head of Programme at the Alfred von Oppenheim Centre for European Policy Studies at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), lectured on political trends and in particular gave her view on the Arab spring. She rated the EU's influence in the processes in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean as being limited. But the EU has experience with similar revolutionary processes in the East European countries at the end of the Cold War. Then, the EU's strategic response was enlargement. What would be an equivalent strategic response to the Arab spring the

EU could come up with now? Möller suggested that the EU had to reassess its interests in the region first. The European Neighbourhood Policy with a “fortress Europe” and the Europeans putting up fences again was not a good idea. The EU would not be sustainable if it carries on building frontiers to its neighbours. The EU will have to pursue further a good working relationship with its southern neighbours and concentrate on bridge-building with the nation states in this region. This bridge-building, however, would have to happen in other areas as well – like the civil society – and not just in and through the European institutions in Brussels but also by the EU member states.

Thomas Jarzombek, Member of the German Bundestag for the CDU/CSU, addressed from the perspective of an MP the question of the influence of social media on politics and the risks and chances of social media for politics. Jarzombek began his lecture with the statement that while on the one hand one can lose an election through the Internet that does not necessarily mean on the other hand that one can win it with the help of the Internet. He explained that through the Internet it has gotten much easier to maximise the negative effects mistakes by politicians can have on public opinion than to create a positive effect through the marketing of political successes of politicians. To illustrate his argument Jarzombek spoke about the political scandals the CDU party was faced with during the last election campaign in the German state of Northrhine-Westphalia: those scandals had a large impact, the MP believed, on public opinion because they were excessively dealt with in Internet blogs. Jarzombek also dealt with the issue of direct democracy and spoke about the question in how far the Internet and social media tools like twitter can be helpful for members of the public who want to engage in politics. Additionally, the member of German parliament touched upon the question of transparency and confidentiality in politics and the problem of hackers. While Jarzombek concluded that transparency is extremely important for a functioning democracy he also conceded that not everything happening in government should be in the public eye. He argued that there always will be some need for confidentiality in politics in order for certain negotiations to be completed successfully.

On Friday, 22 July, after a guided tour through the Reichstag and its dome we visited the German



Finance Ministry, a ministerial building of the 30ies with a historic socialist mural from the time when the building housed most of the ministries of the GDR. In the hall in which the GDR was originally founded, where the East-SPD and the Communists later were forced to merge and where Ulbricht in the early 1960s said those famous words about the GDR government having no intention to build a wall, shortly before it went up, we were met by Dr. Martin Heipertz,

Deputy Head of the Finance Minister's Private Office, who is also a Young Königswinter Alumni. He gave an extremely insightful background talk on the European sovereign debt crisis. It was especially fascinating to hear the view of someone who works in the ministry on a complicated and sensitive issue like this – especially with regard to the European summit which had just taken place the day before. We learned also a lot about the pressures policymakers face when it comes to making sensible and effective decisions in a difficult international economic and financial situation like the present one. Heipertz' speech raised a lot of questions from German and British participants alike –

maybe also because their respective governments have had and still have a very different take on the question of the merit of Euro membership.

In the evening at a dinner party hosted by the German Foreign Ministry, David Hanna from the Department for Culture and Communications talked to us about the role of social media, especially in cultural diplomacy. As his take on social media was so completely different from the one we had already heard of by Thomas Jarzombek before, it was of especial interest. Hanna gave us an insight into how the German government attempts to communicate its foreign policy – with specific reference to social media. He also touched on the issue of cultural promotion through the Foreign Office in other countries of the world. While stressing the opportunities for governments in explaining their foreign and cultural policy with the means of social media he mentioned also the limits these new forms of communication impose. He made it very clear that there are a number of topics which cannot be addressed through the means of Facebook or Twitter – no matter how advanced technological developments will get. Last but not least Hanna referred to the developments in the Arabian countries and the role of social media in the events there.

## 2. Conference programme

**Venue: European Academy Berlin, Bismarckallee 46/48, 14193 Berlin**

### **Tuesday, 19 July 2011**

- 19:00                      *Arrival at Berlin Tegel (BA 986)  
Everybody will make their own way to the EAB*
- 19:30                      *Light dinner at the EAB*
- As of 21:00              *Opportunity for a welcome-get together at the EAB*

### **Wednesday, 20 July 2011**

- 08:00                      Breakfast
- 09:00                      **Opening of the conference**  
by the Chairman Sir Nigel Broomfield, Former Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic and Gebhardt von Moltke, Chairman of the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft e.V.
- Key note Speakers**  
Dr. Peter Schoof, Deputy Director General  
(EU external issues and relations with EU Member States), Auswärtiges Amt
- British Ambassador, Simon McDonald, CMG
- 11:00                      **Introductions** to the study group topics by selected participants:  
Political trends: Anita Hurrell, Mark Fliegau  
Economic trends: Sahera Abbasi, Max Neufeind  
Societal trends: Adrian Gahan, Anna Catherin Loll
- 12:30                      Lunch at EAB
- 14:30                      **Lecture on political trends**  
Speaker: Almut Möller, Head of Programme  
Alfred von Oppenheim Centre for European Policy Studies, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)

- 16:30            **Study group sessions begin**  
Selection of Chair and Rapporteur
- 19:00            **Walk to Simon McDonald's residence, Höhmannstr. 10, 14193 Berlin-Grünwald**
- 19:30            **Dinner hosted by the British Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, Simon McDonald**

**Thursday, 21 July 2011**

- 08:00            Breakfast
- 09:00-11:00    **Study groups**
- 13:00            Lunch at EAB
- 14:00            **Lecture on the societal future**  
Speaker: Thomas Jarzombek, MdB (CDU/CSU)  
Member of the German Parliament  
inter alia Member of the Sub-Committee on the New Media as well as Study Commission on the Internet and the Digital Society
- 16:30            **Study groups**
- 18:00            Transfer to Würth Haus
- 18:30-21.30    **Würth Haus, Schwanenwerder**  
Concert, Lecture, Dinner  
Speaker: Manfred Kurz, Director of Würth Haus

**Friday, 22 July 2011**

- 08:00            Breakfast
- 09:00            **Study groups**
- 11:30-12:30    Early Lunch at the EAB
- 12:30            Transfer to Berlin-Mitte
- 13:30-15:00    **Guided tour, Deutscher Bundestag on invitation**
- 15:00            Walk to the Federal Ministry of Finance
- 15:30            **Lecture on economic trends**  
Speaker: Dr. Martin Heipertz, Deputy Head of Minister's Office, Federal Ministry of Finance
- 17:30            Walk to Brasserie am Gendarmenmarkt
- 18:00            **Dinner at the invitation of the Federal Foreign Office**  
  
Speaker: Benjamin Hanna, Desk Officer,  
Strategy & Planning of Public Diplomacy,  
Department for Culture and Communications,  
Federal Foreign Office

**Saturday, 23 July 2011**

- 08:00            Breakfast



09:00-11:00	<b>Study groups</b>
12:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	<b>Preparation of study group reports</b>
15:30	Transfer to Berlin-Mitte and time off
17:30	<b>Boat trip</b> through the historical centre of Berlin with buffet, Berliner Dom am Radisson Blu Hotel Boat will leave at 17:30 sharp
21:00	<b>Summer Soirée at the invitation of the Young Königswinter Alumni and the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft Café Bravo, Auguststr. 69, 10117</b>

### **Sunday, 24 July 2011**

08:00	Breakfast and check-out
09:30-12:45	<b>Presentation of working group results Plenary session</b>
13:00	<b>Wrap-up/ Feedback</b>
13:15	Lunch at EAB
14:30	<b>Transfer to Berlin-Tegel</b>
16:40	<b>Flight to London (BA 985)</b>

### **3. The study groups**

On the first day of the conference we met for the first time in our study groups. Even though we had some idea of what should be discussed in these groups by the topics list we had received before, we quickly realized how difficult it was to actually organize the discussions we were going to have in the next couple of days all by ourselves. Should we try to address as many topics as possible from the topics list? Or should we narrow it down right away? How many issues would we actually be able to tackle in the few hours of discussion that were available to us? Into how much detail should we go in our discussions? Should we discuss all the topics with all members of the group or should we rather split up into smaller groups? What should the study group presentation on Sunday look like? How would we be able to give an audience whose members had not been part of our study group an interesting and valid insight into what we had talked about these last couple of days? When exactly would we have to begin preparing the presentation and how long would the preparation take? We realized that having complete freedom to organize ourselves posed a lot more difficulties than being presented with a schedule and an agenda which we were meant to complete by Saturday afternoon. But first of all we had to elect a chairman for our study group and a rapporteur. The groups went about this differently and either elected one chairman for the whole duration of the study group sessions or had the chairmanship rotate among the group members.



#### 4. The supporting programme and evening events

Apart from the study groups and the plenary sessions, the core of the conference, there was a varied supporting programme. It was great that we had had the possibility to arrive at the Europäische Akademie already on Tuesday evening to be able to settle in before the conference officially started. Since the weather was nice that day we sat out in the Akademie's garden long into the evening and got to know each other (and the Bulgarian wine they served at the Akademie) a bit. On Wednesday evening we walked over to Ambassador McDonald's residence to attend an enjoyable dinner there to which he had invited us. As the weather was still quite nice we were able to enjoy the park of his residence as well. On Thursday evening we attended a reception at the Würth Haus on the Schwanenwerder Island right at the Wannsee. Even though it was extremely rainy that day we enjoyed a great view across the Wannsee from the house's enormous balcony before going inside to be treated to some extremely experimental music by a Greek pianist and a Swiss drummer – a performance that left a lasting impression on all of us. We were shown a film about the Würth Company, a privately owned company which makes billions every year around the world with screws. In addition Manfred Kurz, Director of Würth Haus, in a speech gave us his views on the European sovereign debt crisis. He left us with more than enough to discuss at the following dinner when he closed his lecture with the remarks that, he believed, there was "life after the Euro". On Friday, 22 July, we attended another enjoyable dinner at the invitation of the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany in a lovely Brasserie close to the Gendarmenmarkt. On Saturday we all went together into the city centre of Berlin and boarded a boat in the afternoon which took us up and down the river Spree while we had dinner on board. Especially for participants who had not been to Berlin before this was of particular interest as they were able to see some of the famous sights of Berlin by passing by on the water. As the weather had gotten a lot nicer again that day, in the end almost everyone was sitting on deck taking time to talk about as varied issues as the German Foreign Office in history and the death of Amy Winehouse. Afterwards we walked to Café Bravo, where we were invited to the Young Königswinter Alumni's Summer Soirée. It was extremely interesting to meet other people who had attended the conference in the years before which allowed us to compare conference experiences.



#### 5. The closing session and the presentations by the study groups

On the final day of the conference, Sunday, 22 July, each of the three study groups presented the topics they had discussed the days before. Each of the presentations was completely different in style from the others.

The group started which had discussed political trends. They had decided to present the state of their discussions on the Arab spring in the form of a current affairs TV programme and to concentrate on developments in one of the countries in question: Egypt. All members of the group were involved when they re-enacted the protests in Egypt. Eshaan (photo, r.) as presenter led through the "TV programme" and linked the various parts of the group's presentation. Jeremy (photo, l.) acted as the journalist who was covering and commenting on the events in Egypt. Additionally, we saw an interview with a former German foreign minister and a former British ambassador. They reacted separately to

the protests, spoke about the issue from their countries' perspective and addressed the question which role their respective country could take with regard to the developments in the Southern Mediterraneans. Even an assessment of the situation from a lecturer at the University of Cairo and a development secretary was given. Members of a think tank gave also their view on the developments in this region of the world and answered to the question what they would say to Angela Merkel and David Cameron about the developments in these North African



countries. With this presentation format the group was able to indicate in a lively way what they thought were the critical issues and debates regarding the so-called Arab spring. The presentation illustrated also very well how many different interests and varied groups are involved in this process and how complex it is actually to try to come to terms with this issue.

Second up was the economic trends group. All the members of the group also were involved in the presentation. They had decided to concentrate on three issues: The first was the question how European countries would be able to become more competitive in the future; the second was the European sovereign debt crisis; and lastly, some thoughts on what a different view of our economic environment could look like. Max guided through the presentation. The group addressed the question of European countries' economic competitiveness in the future by having European secretaries of the year 2021 explain what they had done in the last ten years in their specific policy field in order to raise European competitiveness. There were the secretaries for energy, research and development, demography, social policy and corporate governance giving us an insight into what impediments and obstacles existed to achieve more European competitiveness and what they had done in the past to tackle them. Especially the demography secretaries' proposal of a common European pension scheme raised a lot of questions from the audience and the debate gave everyone an indication of the difficulties policy makers are faced with when trying to take sensible policy decisions with a perspective to the future – since there are always so many arguments for and against a policy proposal. Regarding the European sovereign debt crisis the group had decided to contrast the two main approaches which are currently discussed in politics and the media in order to solve the problem. John and Anselm argued the case for more European integration since – as John said – EMU “is a house that's half built and we need to go on building it”. Both talked about the benefits further harmonization in the Eurozone would bring for all its members. Richard and Mareike took the opposing view and argued the case for Greece's exit from the Eurozone. They gave also an indication about how this exit would actually be possible in an orderly fashion. The four did not only present their case but addressed also the problems of the two policy approaches and thereby gave everyone a clear summary of the arguments for and against the policy proposals we hear and read so much about in the media these days. Lisa closed the presentation with a commentary suggesting that even in moments of crisis we should not get lost in detail and more importantly that we should take the time to ask ourselves important long-term questions with regard to our future like the one: What's beyond growth? And, what society do we truly want to live in?

Lastly the members of the group which had discussed current societal trends presented the topics they had been dealing with in the past week: social media, an ageing society, scarcity of resources and multiculturalism. Sebastian introduced the subject of social media and its effects on society and also addressed a number of important questions: Represent social media today a fundamental break from our past? Should governments regulate the usage of social media? Is widespread use of social media a phenomenon which only affects open/western societies? In order to get the participants of the plenary session involved in the presentation through social media Seb encouraged everyone to contribute to it by starting a twitter discussion on these issues. Laura then talked about the drivers and the effects of demographic change. As she addressed it as a social problem her approach was completely different from the view of the economic group had presented when dealing with it from an economic perspective. She spoke about changing family structures and the decline of informal care and mentioned as possible solution the building up of share homes where elderly people would be able to live in a social group like a family. Matt then addressed the issue of how our belief system, which is based on a faith in modernity, access and promises of more, is challenged today by a growing scarcity of resources– especially relating to water, fuel, and food. Speaking about the reaction of governments to these threatening developments he argued that they have become more and more complacent and that they seem not well equipped to address these problems. In order to deal with resource scarcity effectively the group called for strong leadership by governments. Maria then gave an insight into what the group had discussed with regard to multiculturalism – not just the present situation and the future challenges but also with a view to the terrible events in Norway which had just taken place. The group had come to the conclusion that with regard to multiculturalism the development of radical positions, the fragmentation of society and unemployment were some of the most pressing issues to be addressed in order to create a peaceful environment. Maria mentioned that people feel multiculturalism “just happened” and argued for an active policy to manage cohabitation of different ethnic groups in one society instead of mere passive tolerance. The group concluded with a summary of proposals: Regarding the problems of an ageing society they felt that a solution should not concentrate on the traditional welfare state instead they argued for flexible solutions. With regard to multiculturalism they argued for active tolerance in the society against a separation of the different societal groups. On the question of scarcity of resources they asked for more involvement and planning by the governments instead of leaving the solutions to the principle of the market.

When closing the conference Sir Nigel Broomfield said that Young Königswinter was meant, first, to bring young people from both countries with an interest in public affairs together, so they can discuss relevant topics, get input from others and learn from each other. Secondly, that the participants were meant to learn also about each other and build friendships. Thirdly, speaking about leadership he reminded everybody, that if one does not take part in discussions on public affairs one cannot complain about decisions being taken without one’s input. Regarding Young Königswinter of 2011 it is safe to say that the conference easily achieved all of these aims. All of us left the conference having met new people and having made new friends. And, we took part in and contributed to interesting discussions on issues affecting our countries and our life and we had learnt how others thought about these issues which was particularly



rewarding when it helped to change our views or our minds. In the study groups and from the discussions we learnt how difficult it sometimes is to exercise leadership and to come to terms with lots of different positions on an issue. We also realized how hard it is to try to come to a sensible conclusion if a broad variety of views exists. For giving us the possibility to experience all this we extend our thanks to the staff at the Europäische Akademie, the sponsors, the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft – especially Ellen Hausdörfer –, Gebhardt von Moltke and Sir Nigel Broomfield. It was for any of us an amazing experience to meet so many different people, to be able to explore Berlin and to have lots of interesting and exiting discussions on our “world in motion” and on the impact global developments have on our lives be it in Germany or in the United Kingdom